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Berkeley*

MELIORA:

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BY

WILLIAM ELDER, Esq., A. M.

BEFORE THE

ALUMNI

OF THE

MOUNT ALLISON WESLEYAN COLLEGE,

SACKVILLE,

ON THE 1ST OF JUNE, 1880.



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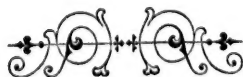
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ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, FREDERICTON.

The induction of the Rev. A. J. Mowatt, as Minister of St. Paul's Church, Fredericton, as recently recorded in our columns, with the pleasant welcome subsequently extended to him by the congregation, is an event of general importance. As was remarked by Professor Fowler at the re-union, on Friday night, Fredericton being the capital of the Province, the seat of a University and Normal School, as well as a city in which the other denominations are well represented, it is important that old St. Paul's should make a creditable appearance. The venerable pastor of the church, the Rev. Dr. Brooke, has, like the venerable Metropolitan of the Church of England, long been doing a good work. Now that the pastor of St. Paul's is necessarily obliged to withdraw from active duties, it is important that his place should be supplied by a minister equal to the situation.

The record of St. Paul's goes back for half a century and its early history is somewhat interesting, recalling as it does the names of men who did good work for the church in bye-gone days.

The first meeting held towards the formation of this church took place on February 17, 1829. Wm. Taylor, Thos. Stewart, Thos. Aitken, Thos. C. Everett and James Willox were then appointed a committee, with James Taylor, secretary, and T. R. Robertson, treasurer, to carry the resolutions of the meeting into effect.

A lot of land, 70x80 feet, was granted as a site by James Taylor, and the present building was erected by July, 1830, at a cost of over £1,000, James Dunn being the contractor.

The church was opened by the Rev. Mr. Souter. During the same month, a call was extended to the Rev. Ebenezer Johnston, of Kircaldy, who, though he did not accept it, came out in June of the following year and conducted the services for a few months. He then returned to Scotland.

The church was incorporated in 1832, and the first trustees elected under the Act of incorporation were:—Wm. Taylor, Thos. Stewart, Thomas Aitken, Thomas C. Everett, James Willox, T. R. Robertson, James Taylor, Jr., of whom there are now no survivors. The only surviving members who signed the call to Mr. Johnston are Wm. McBeath, Francis Beverly and Hugh Dougherty. The first Pastor was the

Rev. J. Birkmyre, A. M. He was sent off from Scotland in answer to an application of the trustees to the Rev. Dr. McGill, of Glasgow. He was inducted on the 4th of November, 1832. The Rev. R. Wilson, of St. John's, preached on the occasion. Rev. Dr. Birkmyre resigned in April, 1842. The congregation was without a Pastor till the 11th of July, 1843, when the present Pastor, the Rev. John M. Brooke, D.D., formerly of New Richmond, Lower Canada, was inducted. The Rev. Mr. Wishart, of St. John, preached on that occasion. Dr. Brooke continued to discharge the entire duties of the pastorate till 1868, when the Rev. Wm. Murray, now of New Richmond, was appointed as assistant. Mr. Murray resigned the charge, after a service of about eight months, to accept a call from the Campbellton congregation. He was succeeded in turn by the Rev. Messrs. Findlay, McDonald, P. Melville, J. Moffat and S. Halley. On the resignation of Mr. Halley, in September, 1874, Dr. Brooke wished to retire from the active duties of the pastorate. The congregation in the meantime endeavored to procure what assistance they could to relieve the beloved pastor of his excessive labor till April, 1876, when Rev. W. Caven, of Tilsonburg, Ontario, was inducted as his colleague and successor. Mr. Caven resigned in April, 1878, since which time the congregation has been endeavoring to obtain a successor to Mr. Caven, and have now succeeded in obtaining the Rev. A. J. Mowatt, whose induction has just been recorded in our columns.

The new minister brings with him an excellent reputation in every respect, but ministers, like others, are best tested by years of service; and when congregations or the public at once place the new-comers on the highest pinnacle of fame, it is evident that they can never get any higher, and the danger is that they may not be able to keep their position. It is better to leave some room for progress.

The chief work to be done in St. Paul's will, of course, be of a moral and spiritual nature. The life, energy and warmth of the pulpit must be made to overflow into the pews; while the young as well as the old must be attracted by the teachings and the personal intercourse of the new minister. There are, however, some external and internal matters that ought, at an early day, to engross the attention of all who take an interest

in St. Paul's. The pews are of the old perpendicular, high-backed style, with narrow seats, something like those which were to be found in St. Andrew's Church, St. John, before the great fire. The galleries are high, and the pulpit necessarily occupies a very elevated position. Anyone who has sat an hour or two on a narrow seat, with a high perpendicular back, will appreciate the patience and long-suffering of the members of the church who have for so many years sat in St. Paul's. Some one has written a book, finding that Christianity must be true, or it would long since have ceased to exist owing to the errors and mistakes of those who professed it, and we have heard of a beadle who informed a Bishop of the Church of England, that he (the beadle) felt that he had much to be grateful for, because he had sat in a certain church in Oxford for a great part of a

With a good, lively, energetic pastor, whose sermons must not be too long, good music, good hymns, a modern church, or at least modern pulpit and pews, and a courteous, united, evangelistic and missionary church, Old St. Paul's ought to take a new lease of life, and be able to take an honorable part in promoting the moral and spiritual well being of the people of Fredericton.

At the time that the accompanying address was delivered, I promised to many friends of the Mount Allison Institutions that I would put it in print at any early day, not because it contained anything particularly note-worthy, but as a souvenir of a pleasant re-union. I was the more desirous of doing so as, owing to circumstances, the address was very ineffectively read, and portions of it were not well heard. Many pre-occupations prevented me from making a copy for the printer at an earlier date, and thus fulfilling my promise. This is now done for the reasons above stated.

W. E.

life time and was still able to thank God that he was a Christian. We should say that Presbyterianism must have some sterling merits when it can stand narrow seats, with high, perpendicular backs, for half a century or so, to say nothing of other defective surroundings.

A gentleman, who passed part of a great many years in Fredericton, once said to us that when he went to the Cathedral he found the seats open to all; that when he went to the Methodist church, he found several persons ready to show him to a pew, and had, indeed, invitations to pews in advance, but that when he went to St. Paul's, he found no one to show him to a pew and the seats generally full. If no change has taken place of late for the better, the present may be a good time to turn over a new leaf in regard to the strangers, seeing that those who extend hospitality to that class of persons have, before now, entertained angels unaware.

MELIORA:

An Oration delivered by William Elder, Esq., A. M.,
before the Alumni of the Mount Allison Wesleyan
College, Sackville, on the 1st of June, 1880.

Mr. President and Members of the Alumni Association,—

I return to you my sincere thanks for your kind and flattering invitation to address you on the present festal occasion. I received it with the greatest pleasure, looking upon it as an indication that you felt that you and I had certain sympathies in common, a circumstance which could not be otherwise than a source of gratification to me. Any regrets that I have had, any misgivings that I still have, on account of accepting the invitation, have arisen from a realizing sense of my many pre-occupations and a fear that with the limited time at my disposal, I should be unable to put into proper form the few words that I might wish to address to you. This is an anticipation that I fear will be only too fully realized, and I regret the fact the more when I think of the number of able addresses, from prominent men, which you have been accustomed to receive, in this place, from year to year.

I can truly say, however, that I have long felt a deep interest in the institutions which are represented here to-day, by so many bright faces and ingenious and ardent natures. These institutions were founded in a spirit of enlightened patriotism and Christian philanthropy, which must ever cast a halo around the name of Charles F. Allison; they have been sustained in a way that does honor to the Wesleyans of the Maritime Provinces, and have been equipped by a body of Professors and other teachers whose learning, zeal and devotion shed lustre on the profession. The course of studies prescribed is liberal, and in accordance with the spirit of an age which, while it reveres the past, does not overlook the stern utilitarian demands of the present. I am heartily glad that your programme takes in the great domain of art, which has so

great a history and so great a mission; which exercises so profound an influence in the formation of taste, the nurture of genius and the development of national spirit.

Since the inception of your Academies and College, they have been attended by large numbers of students through whom the intellectual, moral and religious benefits; the ameliorations and refinements which flow from such schools of learning, have been widely diffused. Among the alumni I find the names of senators and members of the House of Commons of Canada and of the Provincial Legislatures; professors and other teachers; clergymen, lawyers, physicians, agriculturists and mechanics—for whom you provide a special course—and not a few others. The names of the alumnae would of themselves make a goodly list. The sphere in which women usually move in Canada is not such as to bring them prominently before the public eye, but its limitations do not prevent them from carrying into the social circle, the intellectual and moral acquisitions; the grace, the gentleness and the goodness which result from Christian culture, and which, while they are their own great reward, are so much needed to sweeten and transfigure the oft monotonous and toilsome rounds of every day life.

Your institutions have already attained to a respectable age, for in less than another decade you will have reached your fiftieth year, a period comparatively long in the history of a young country like this. But your lineage is much more ancient than your institutions, and goes back to the far distant past. I see in the Mount Allison Wesleyan College a worthy descendant of those ancient schools of learning with which Europe became so rapidly dotted after the fall of Constantinople, and the diffusion and revival of letters, and which had a great and famous history. They attracted towards them hundreds of thousands of students, developing in them feelings of self-sacrifice of the most ennobling character. Many of those students were poor and badly clothed. Many of them actually begged their way over half a continent in order that they might sit at the feet of some teacher of note in Paris, in Bologne, in Oxford. As the plant in the darkling cellar stretches forth its tendrils towards the light; as the bird immured in darkness, when it greets the rays of the morning sun, bursts into song; so did those students, welcome the dawn of the new

learning, and so did their tongues become loud in its praise. They did not indeed enjoy many of the advantages which you possess, for the conquests of science and letters and discovery, since the close of the 16th century, mark an epoch in the history of our race. But while you can roam in more ample fields of research, it will be well if you are inspired with the same love of learning which animated their bosoms, and are prepared to make equal sacrifices in order to obtain it. As one who has participated in the studies of the Universities of the Old World, which were in the true line of academical, I had almost said apostolical succession—for the University of Glasgow was founded by Pope Nicholas IV., a century before the Reformation—I gladly bear to you the fraternal sympathies of your fellow workers elsewhere, your “kin beyond the sea.” I congratulate you on the comparatively happy period in which you live, and on the bright prospects of the amelioration of men’s condition which mark the closing decades of the century. It is the great possibilities of our schools in this respect; the men they may produce and the good they may effect, that invest all gatherings of youthful alumni with such solemn interest. A few centuries ago, a certain German teacher was accustomed to say that he always took off his hat in the presence of boys—an excellent example to the boys—because, he said, he never ceased to feel that there might be some great man among them. One of his pupils was a youth who was afterwards known to Germany, and to the world, as Dr. Martin Luther.

The other day I came across a paragraph which an Eton boy, of humble birth and social position, not one who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, had contributed to his College paper a good many years ago. I think it is likely to interest you. It expresses some hopes and fears that are not peculiar to young men at college. It reads as follows:

In my present undertaking there is one gulf in which I fear to sink, and that gulf is Lethe. There is one stream which I dread my inability to stem; it is the tide of popular opinion. I have ventured, and no doubt rashly ventured—

Like wanton boys that swim on bladders,
To try my fortune in a sea of glory,
But far beyond my depth.

At present it is hope alone that buoys me up; for more substantial support I must be indebted to my own exertions, well knowing that in this land of literature, merit never wants its reward. That such merit is

mine I dare not presume to think ; but still there is something within me that bids me hope that I may be able to glide prosperously down the stream of public estimation ; or, in the words of Virgil,—

—— celare viam rumore secundo.

The writer was William Ewart Gladstone.

About the same time another youth, who laboured under still greater disadvantages, was pursuing his studies in another school. Soon he wrote a book to which he prefixed the motto :

Why then the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.

The book showed that the sword which the hero intended to use was to be fashioned out of the learning and culture of which he was a devotee, and out of the aspirations that animated his bosom. He soon makes his hero use these words :

For it was one of the first principles of Mr. Vivian Grey that every thing was possible. Men *did* fail in life to be sure, and after all a very little was done by the generality ; but still all these failings and all this inefficiency might be traced to the want of physical and mental courage. Now Vivian Grey was conscious that there was at least one person in the world who was no craven either in body or mind, and so he had long come to the comfortable conclusion that it was impossible that his career could be anything but the most brilliant.

You are already acquainted with Mr. Vivian Grey and therefore I need not remark on the way in which his case, also, illustrates the possibilities of student life ; or how it adds another to the many proofs that fact is often stranger than fiction.

But while I quote such cases as these as interesting illustrations of the possibilities of life, and the influence of liberal learning and culture in furnishing mental furniture and equipment fitted to help men to know "how to take occasion by the hand," I hope you will not for one moment suppose that I forget that the great mass of the uncounted millions of the human family must earn their bread by toil ; that the more learned professions and avocations, which however involve no little hard work, are not for the masses, though there is said to be always room enough at the top ; and that the great places of state are for a still more select circle. These are facts never to be forgotten, and I for one do not wish to construct another Utopia. Not only do I bear them in mind, but I realize the blessedness of work, and the happiness of a sphere of activity often vainly sought by large numbers of men, and still more hopelessly by large numbers of women, who are entitled to

a wider field of activity than they have yet been able to obtain. Accepting all these facts, is it not still true that the man is more than his trade, and that he cannot live by bread alone? Is it not true that knowledge will make labor more productive and more ennobling, seeing that it will thus be made a means of exercising the mind, and cease to be mere manual toil? A familiar illustration readily presents itself to my mind. The relations between geology and agriculture are close and intimate. Will not a knowledge of the one invest the study of the other with dignity, as well as be most desirable on the lowest utilitarian grounds? Then again, do not the laborer and the mechanic need to be emancipated from the control of the appetites and passions even more than those who stand on a higher intellectual and social plane, and may we not say of a truly liberal education, affecting the soul as well as the mind, what some one says of philosophy, and which in a higher sense might be said of religion, "it will bake no bread, but it gives us our souls; it gives us heaven; it gives us the knowledge of those grand truths which concern us as immortal beings?"

I would not have been tempted to indulge in this line of remark at so much length, but for its intimate bearing on the object which I have had in view from the outset; which is to show that the strength, power and freedom of the individual, and his entire mental and moral enfranchisement are promoted and often secured by liberal culture, however imparted; with corresponding advantages to the community, the nation and the race. Among the appliances of culture I include all truth, so far as available, whether human or divine, if indeed, such a distinction be allowable. In regard to culture, I say "however acquired," for I admit that much may be accomplished by personal effort; much may be derived from books, from observation, from travel, but still I think that there are great advantages in the college and university systems, under which large bodies of students meet together in the same class-rooms, studying under the same professors, mingling in the same debating and literary clubs, and joining in the same sports. In this way feelings of *esprit de corps*, of brotherhood, of loyal attachment to the alma mater are created, that, nourished by the traditions and associations of the place, often become a source of strength and power; to say nothing of the fact that

students not unfrequently are nearly as much indebted to each other as to their respective professors, and to omit all reference to the dear, sacred, disinterested and lasting friendships that are often connected with college life and form a most valuable portion of it. In this respect it is difficult for the so-called paper Colleges which are also doing much good, but which are mere examining bodies, to do a work equal to that which is being done by the teaching Universities.

Such being the agencies that are at work in our higher schools of learning, I can hardly conceive of any one who would not be a gainer by being subjected to their liberalising, elevating and humanising influences. I have argued that question in the case of the man destined to toil with hand or brain. Does not the principle apply to the most]gifted minds of the race? The poet is said to be born, not made. If any person may be supposed to be able to dispense with such means of mental discipline it would be the poet. But how stands the fact? Our distinguished poet laureate possesses natural gifts of a high order, but no one can read many of his poems without seeing how greatly Alfred Tennyson is indebted to the learning and thought of his time. Who so naturally gifted as Robert Burns? His poems will hardly ever cease to be read; his songs will never cease to be sung, and yet how far short he comes of what he might have been. His great and sympathetic countryman, Thomas Carlyle, points out this fact. In his unique article on the poet, speaking of his poems, he intimates that they were "no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for its completeness; CULTURE, leisure, *true effort*." Mr. Carlyle enforces his position by an illustration that is striking and by an argument that is unanswerable. He says:

An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works accordingly with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed or forever shut against him. His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with his pick-axe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them ahead with his arms.

Those of you who have read how Riley in the contest with Hanlan was thrown out of the race by losing two strokes, in consequence of the breaking of a shoe-strap, and who have noticed that the conflicts of life resolve themselves relentlessly into the survival of the fittest, will hardly require such a Titanic demonstration as Mr. Carlyle furnishes in support of his position. But with what tenderness, truth, beauty and apt discrimination does Carlyle estimate the genius of Burns, and the advantages and disadvantages of the poet. Doubtless some of you have learned by heart the following tribute to his memory :—

In pitying admiration, he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler mausoleum than that one of marble ; neither will his works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers in the country of Thought, bearing fleets, traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves ; this little Valcusa fountain will also arrest our eye ; for this also is Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth with a full, gushing current, into the light of day ; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters and muse among its rocks and its pines !

I did not intend to refer to the great iconoclast of shams, the great critic, biographer and historian, as himself an illustration of the influence of science and good letters in enlarging, strengthening and enfranchising the mind ; but now that his name has been incidentally mentioned, I can hardly avoid doing so in passing. Great as is the natural grasp and power of Mr. Carlyle's mind, and much of it as may have been due to the character of the original fibre, you must all feel that the schools and universities did a great work for him when they furnished him with such a knowledge of language and philosophy as enabled him to extend his studies with pleasure, and thus to become what he long has been, a bright particular star in the resplendent galaxy of British literature. I shall only add that it is pleasing to be able to believe in regard to the great Chelsea sage, now in a very green old age, that the enfranchisements of education have not deprived him of the benefits of the nurture of his youth, when in his Shorter Catechism he was taught that "the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." Carlyle knows and feels more than most men that it is not by idle contemplation that God is most glorified in this work-a-day world, but in work that ought to be worship. We are informed that to-day he feels more than ever the power

of the prayer which he learned at his mother's knee, when with folded hands he was taught to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven," the first words in religion and the last words in philosophy.

But I may be asked, leaving particular and perhaps exceptional cases, to furnish evidence of the fact that the liberalising culture which it is claimed has created or stimulated the modern spirit of inquiry, and promoted the enfranchisement of the individual has actually done so and left its impress on the world. The demand is legitimate and easily met, except as to the limitations of time.

When we cast a glance back at some of the recent centuries that we have left behind us, we come in contact with a great many things which were then accepted as undoubted verities which can hardly be said to have any existence to-day. Where are those magic arts, on account of their alleged devotion to which so many truth-seekers were persecuted and imprisoned and the supposed existence and practice of which caused so much terror? They have not resulted in any thing much worse than the discovery of gunpowder, electricity and some other well known phenomena. What has become of the great science of astrology, which so long dominated over the minds of men; its revelations filling them with terror and alarm? The names and cards of some astrologers, mostly women, and generally spiritualists, so called, may be read in some newspapers of the neighboring Republic. The operations of such persons are rather obscure and subterranean, and do not exercise much influence on society. Zadkiel is still with us, but his prophecies can be read with as little alarm as the predictions of the weather prophets. They are as harmless as the weird utterances of the fortune-telling gypsies, or the guarded and oracular deliverances of the young lady who reveals to us our destiny by manipulating cards. The operation pleases her and does not hurt any one. It was different at one time, for then the movements of the heavenly bodies were supposed to be mainly directed with reference to the actions of men, more especially the greater personages of the world. As the poets noted:

When beggars die there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

And again:

The warrior's fate is blazoned in the skies;
A world is darkened when a hero dies.

The appearance of comets has led monarchs to abdicate their

thrones. Eclipses, earthquakes, volcanoes, even thunder and lightning, were variously construed as intimations of the wrath of heaven, or as warnings from the realms of lost souls. What a vast literature this absurd yet terrible science, falsely so called, has had, and what enormous, disgusting and enslaving influences it has exercised.

The science of astrology fell before the rising light of astronomy, and the knowledge of the laws of gravitation. It passed away before the majestic generalizations of the new science, and now nearly all that is left to us of astrology is a few of the personages to whom we have just referred, and some cabalistic astrological symbols, which some persons still like to see printed in their almanacs. We have been emancipated from the dread of threatening stars, unfriendly constellations and unlucky days. If, however, a young lady would positively refuse to be married on Friday, there are several other days on which the ceremony may be performed with entire impunity. I do not know that the virtues of witch-hazel or mineral-rods have become entirely exhausted, but I do not think that they are much used in searching for gold at the Montagu diggings, or for oil or Albertite at Beliveau. The ignoble army of quacks, pretenders and impostors, has not altogether disappeared, but this is rather because their natural prey, the fools, are not all dead, than because there is any vitality in the effete delusions which over-awed the minds of our ancestors a century or two ago. Their credulity was so great that they believed the kings of France inherited gifts of healing from St. Louis, and the kings of England from Edward the Confessor. That very saintly monarch, Charles II., touched about one hundred thousand persons for the king's evil; proper religious ceremonies accompanied the acts of healing. Even the great queen Elizabeth, and the good queen Anne, practised the same rite. The better knowledge of pathology, closer examinations of the alleged cures, a better acquaintance with the scope and universality of law have made sad havoc with these gifts of healing. But the most serious thing that happened to them was a change of dynasty. The healing power was clearly influenced by Jacobite leanings, and though it wrought cures even by the blood of king Charles "the martyr," refused to operate among a people that could accept the revolution. The scientific discoveries already referred to, more careful habits of observation, the more humane spirit produced

by the study of the humanities, the discovery of a new continent, enlarging men's minds, a result which the crusades and the change of place and travel they involved also helped to produce, a better knowledge of the Scriptures, and a less cruel spirit, caused by the influence of the Divine messages which they revealed, bore hardly upon the belief in witchcraft. That delusion did, indeed, die hard; it lived long enough to leave its dark stain upon a portion of the new world; over the old it had long dominated. The superstition was based on a misapprehension of the meaning of certain passages of the sacred Scriptures, a very common cause of dangerous error, seeing that such error assumed the disguise of revealed truth and claimed Divine authority. It was owing to the misinterpretation of a word in the Rig-veda, or rather the alteration of a couple of letters, probably a deliberate imposture of the priests, that so many hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of widows, were compelled to permit themselves to be burned to ashes on the funeral pyres of their husbands. It was in the name of the Founder of the Christian religion, and because of the erroneous idea that the alleged theological error was of the nature of a crime, to be punished by the civil magistrate, at the instigation of the ecclesiastical authorities, that so many human beings were cruelly put to death on the scaffold, in the flames and in many other ways; often with preliminary and excruciating tortures. But there was a great difference between the death of the martyr-heretic and that of the supposed witch. The one marched to the scene of death with firm step and uplifted eye, feeling that death was but the gate of life, and that the martyr's crown awaited the so-called heretic at the gates of Paradise; but not so the other. A sympathetic chronicler of the fate of those unhappy beings thus graphically indicates the contrast to which I have just referred :

Not for the witches the wild fanaticism that nerves the soul against danger and almost steels the body against torments; not for them the assurance of a glorious eternity that has made the martyr look with exultation on the rising flame, as on Elijah's chariot that is to bear the soul to heaven. Not for them the solace of lamenting friends, or the consciousness that their memories would be cherished and honored by posterity. They died alone, hated and unpitied. They were deemed by all mankind the worst of enemies. Their very kinsmen shrank from them as hated and accursed. The superstitions they had imbibed in childhood, blending with the illusions of the age, and with the horrors

of their position, persuaded them in many cases that they were indeed the bond slaves of Satan, and were about to exchange their torments upon earth for an agony that was as excruciating, and that was eternal.

It was a proud day for science, for culture, for humanity, for religion, when such atrocious practices fell before the more enlightened, enfranchising spirit of an age that would tolerate them no longer. But the facts of the case should teach mankind that in many cases, it is only by questioning authority, and usage, and prescription, and putting them on their defence, arranging fact and reason against them, that any progress can be made, or that the shackles and fetters of centuries can be removed, and the hoary credulities and superstitions, whose history for long ages may be traced in letters of blood, can be scattered to the four winds of heaven. "It was," says a late historian, "between the writings of Bacon and Locke that Chillingworth taught, for the first or almost the first time in England, the absolute innocence of honest error. It was between the writings of Bacon and Locke that that latitudinarian school was formed which was irradiated by the genius of Taylor, Glanvil and Hales, and which became the very centre and seedplot of religious liberty. It was between the same writings that the writ *de hæretico comburendo* was expunged from the Statute book, and the soil of England for the last time stained with the misbelievers' blood!"

A similar line of remark applies to the criminal code of England, with its enormous list of capital offences—two hundred and twenty three in all, less than a century ago; and to the tyrannical and ignorant restrictions of trade and commerce and so-called usury, most of which have disappeared before the light, the discoveries and the researches of our times; to which the thinkers and professors of the schools and colleges have been the chief contributors.

It was owing to ignorance of the advantages of education, and the way that rewards and punishments operate, that England was long disgraced with that bloody code, to which we have just referred. Then it was that what the State refused to spend on education had to be spent on the relief of pauperism and the repression of crime. The pillory, the habit of flogging men and women in public, and finally in private; wholesale hanging of vagrants, of whom two thousand perished in the reign of Henry VIII. alone,—these were the old English substitutes for the

modern cheap defence of nations. It was owing to terror, born of ignorance, that one class of men wanted the most severe and repressive laws enacted against another; that persons were hanged for killing rabbits, mutilating Westminster bridge, cutting down a tree, or stealing five shillings. It is humiliating to hear that up to the time of Burke and Romilly, immortal names, and later still, there were two hundred and twenty-three offences in the criminal code of England which were punishable with death; and that death hardly ever took place without superadded cruelties to the living, or superadded indignities to the dead, whether man, woman or child. But what a change has taken place in our criminal code, even since the earlier years of the present century. Here, again, the humane spirit of the age, which had cast away intolerance and the mad craze of belief in witchcraft, under benign educational and Christian influences, asserted itself and performed a great act of emancipation. It was the assumption of Judge Heath that a felon could not be reclaimed. That being the case, and as it was expensive to keep felons, it was considered that the best use that could be made of them was to hang them. Before that was done, however, they were usually farmed out to jailors, who consigned them to dungeons that were such pestilential living graves as to be well calculated to reconcile any man to the scaffold. Occasionally the prisoners were exhibited at a charge of so much a head, the jailor becoming rapidly rich, even though he frequently paid something for the privilege of tormenting, humiliating and plundering his victims, who had to submit to the most rapacious demands for money to purchase the miserable shreds of food on which they subsisted. That dreadful criminal code is gone. A study of the principles of prison discipline; a study of the effects of public hangings, when the bravado of the condemned was greeted with the applause of the crowd; a study of the principles of jurisprudence; helped to bring about that consummation, which was demanded in the name of humanity, of science and of religion. It came to be known that a cruel and bloody criminal code did not secure the repression of crime, except in so far as it took the life of the criminal; it came to be understood that the so-called felons might be reclaimed, and that society had a good deal of responsibility for its felons. The experiment was a costly one. As late as the year 1818, when the repression of crime was widely

carried on at great cost, while education continued to be neglected, the sum of \$40,000,000 was ineffectually spent in the relief of paupers in England and Wales. It was no wonder that a change for the better was demanded and took place. But the time would fail me to speak of the injuries inflicted ignorantly by strong nations on weak ones, to the destruction of the one, and the injury of the other, as history so sadly tells, the general absurd notions relating to trade, commerce and usury that long held their sway. But they were edstroyed by the teachings of the schools, the impulse given to the industrial spirit by the discoveries of modern science, and the increased facilities for inter-communication. These atrocities, these delusions, thesemistakes, in legislation, in jurisprudence, in the fiscal policy of the parent nation, had to yield to the ameliorating and emancipating spirit of the education and the nurture that were fast gaining strength in the country.

The history of such beneficent changes ought to involve a notice of the great part which books have played in the gigantic work of mental emancipation. Cicero pronounces a well known and very happy eulogium on studies and books. He is surpassed in that line by Lord Macaulay in his essay on Bacon, and by Dr. Channing in a paper on another subject. But Cicero never saw or knew such books as the modern spirit of investigation and inquiry has produced, and the free atmosphere of our higher schools of learning has called into being. Even in Macaulay and Channing's time such books were not so plenty as they are now. Every lover of truth and progress would willingly strew flowers on the graves of the great authors who are gone, or crown their statues with chaplets; while in his heart of hearts he must honor the men who still live, and thank God that authors were raised up to help to drive away the mists of prejudice and ignorance from our country and our age, many of whose books have all the force of an act of emancipation. The class of books to which I refer, are more especially those which deal with criticism, and especially historical criticism; with history itself, more especially the history, antiquities, philosophies, mythologies and theologies of the great races, the treatment being by the comparative method, which has produced such grand results in other departments of study, and notably in philology. When I think of the kind of

books which so long furnished the pabulum for men's minds ; when I think of what long passed for science, for natural philosophy, for history, for theology, I find my very soul rising in rebellion against the frauds, the deceptions, the impostures so long practised upon men, and I feel as if such another revolution as that which by one fell swoop destroyed the whole political and social system of France, might have been expected to descend as the fitting judgment of heaven in the utter annihilation of all such literary rubbish. The Germans were the pioneers in this great work, which was first destructive and next constructive. But they were followed by Englishmen in the same fields and now our own writers take a place second to none. Their elucidations of the history of our own country ; their inquiries into the causes which have effected thought, morals, creeds, trade, commerce and civilization, have made them the benefactors not only of their country, but of their age. They have done much to promote the cause of progress, of true liberty and mental and moral enfranchisement.

Have we, then, reached the goal? Have our schools, our universities, our free institutions, our discoveries in physical science, our philosophies, our advance in the industrial and in the fine arts ; our trade, our commerce ; our progress in morals and religion produced the desired ameliorations and refinements in life? Have they settled the knotty problems which invite solution, or threaten destruction? Have the beneficent agencies at work been so successful, that the moralist and philanthropist find their work done ; and that they must, like Alexander, sit down and weep because there are no more conquests to be made? Far otherwise.

In one respect, indeed, we have made great and undoubted progress. It is now evident that privilege cannot maintain itself against right ; that the vested interests of the few, however those few may be indemnified, must not be allowed to stand in the way of the well-being of the many. No aristocracies however powerful ; no oligarchies however privileged ; no democracies however strong, can do so. There are no forms of government or administration ; no fiscal, commercial, industrial, sanitary or philanthropic laws or policies which can be allowed to plead immunity from an investigation of their claims and the application of the test of utility. Whatever is good in privilege will be preserved ; whatever

is good in Communism will be eliminated, but the onward march of human beings to a higher plane of comfort and intelligence and a higher sphere of influence is their manifest destiny.

There are not a few moral, social and religious questions, matters relating to taste, to the standard of morals as applicable to all individuals without regard to sex; to the measure of toleration which we have achieved; to the effect of creeds and articles of faith, if not revised at reasonable periods, in placing fetters on free inquiry, or stifling conviction by means of authority, to which I should have liked to refer. They are matters in which the humane and liberalising influence of the schools have not had their perfect work: but I cannot possibly touch on them at present, nor on some other kindred topics which naturally arise out of my theme. Two of the questions of greatest moment to England at present, and which scarcely at all touch ourselves, more especially one of them, are the land question and the labour question. The former is that, which as yet, troubles us very little, though it already arises in the United States, notwithstanding the great domain of public lands which the government had to dispose of. It appears that already it has been well nigh gobbled up, and not long since a writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* affirmed that, owing to the land monopolies that has been created in that country, all the evils of feudalism were already being experienced in it, without of course the old ameliorations accompanying the system. In Canada we will require to be on our guard against the same evil. Some experiences of it in Prince Edward Island were not found to be agreeable. The land question in England is briefly this, that, according to a late historian, one half of the land is owned by a thousand persons, and four-fifths by five or six thousand persons. A great deal of the land owned by some large proprietors, comprises parks, forests, sheep-walks. The disposition of the land, especially as regards the forests and parks and the operations of the game laws, revives the memory of the questions which were agitated first between the Normans and the subjugated Saxons, and afterwards between the English people and their monarchs. It specially revives the record of a very disgraceful and tragic chapter in English history. I refer to the history of the game laws. Archimedes required a place whereon to stand in order to move the world. If it appears, and we think

it is pretty self-evident, that ownership of a reasonable portion of land is necessary in order to the comfort and well-being of the masses of the people of the country, then there is little doubt that laws of entail, and of primogeniture must give way before that consideration, the changes being effected in such a way as to indemnify the present lords of the soil.

An agitation on this subject may clearly be expected, more especially in Ireland, where the late famine with all its attendant sufferings, showed the peril to which the country is exposed. I fondly hope that a solution of the difficulty will be found, and hat a new "merrie England," which I use as a short term for the United Kingdom, will be created—one in which the comforts of the people will be high, their spirit great, and the effervescence of genius, valour, enterprise and chivalry equal to that which marked the reign of Elizabeth, when Shakespeare and Bacon and Ben. Johnson lived; and when Admiral Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh flourished.

The other is the labor question. Has sufficient light been evolved from any quarter to enable it to be disposed of? Workmen claim that they cannot live upon their wages; women poison their children one after another because there is not food enough to sustain them. The employer will not yield; the employed strike. There is a civil war in a great manufacturing establishment. All parties suffer, and finally the weaker yields to the stronger. Here is a problem for the scholar, the thinker, the statesman, and the moralist. All England once rang with the appeal:

O men with sisters dear!
O men with mothers and wives!
It is not the linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives.

But here is a much larger question. Are these matters to be left to be dealt with by the Communists or by the Nihilists? It is to be hoped not. Can co-operation be made to solve the difficulty? or, if not, how is it to be solved? I can only touch upon the point. In connexion with it, let me quote what I consider a remarkably suggestive and comprehensive statement, by the Rev. M. Kaufmann, as published in a late number of the *Contemporary Review*, and which deals with the subject in the spirit of my present remarks:

Therefore, as we look with sad feelings on the shadows of our industrial

system cast athwart the luminous path of modern progress, as we watch the misery, the struggles, and the heroisms of the poor who are deprived of the full sunlight of prosperity, we cannot profess to find consolation in the frigid abstractions of orthodox Political Economy, according to which hard and unbending laws of nature condemn millions to perpetual degradation and indigence. We are equally unwilling to resign ourselves with the politician and philanthropist to an interminable continuation of state-charities and private beneficence to alleviate, without abrogating, the sufferings of the people. Still less are we prepared to join those social innovators who, in the reckless impatience and ill-considered schemes of social reconstruction, would entirely demolish the framework of society as a prelude to future social architecture, at the expense of untold suffering and distress during the transition period of social anarchy. We can only find comfort and hope in the reflection that the mental, moral, as well as the material elevation of the working-classes, mainly by their own effort, but aided by public and private philanthropy, increased culture, technical training, and a growing consciousness of their own higher destiny will gradually free them from the chains of lower passions forged by themselves, and emancipate them from social disabilities for which others are partly responsible. Thus the laboring people, recognizing the dignity of work, associated in combined effort, guided by a common will, and inspired by the unanimous desire to promote one another's welfare, will regenerate society from below, eliminate noxious elements in the course of peaceful evolution, and help in bringing about a more perfect union among a more perfect race of human beings.

A charming picture of an ideal, a happy and a possible social condition. May it become a reality.

But numerous and difficult as are the problems which must be solved by the aid of our best minds, and most illustrious guides, by the savans in their retirement, and by professors in their chairs, in order to secure the complete emancipation of men, and to enable them to fulfil their high destiny, it is evident that the course of humanity must be onward.

Before the ice breaks up in our great rivers, they form highways for traffic, and to one who had no experience, it would seem as if the ice-king would never relax his grasp. But the sun gathers strength; the ice begins to dissolve. It becomes thinner and thinner. It breaks. Little streaks of blue water begin to be seen. They become wider and wider. Lately the water was cribbed, cabined and confined by the ice. Now the water gains the mastery, and sweeps the ice fetters onward. They meet obstacles; they are piled for a time in heaps; they assume the shape of miniature icebergs, but they are borne on, on to the ocean, to be swallowed up in its depths, leaving the blue, free, sparkling

waters behind, prepared for all the demands of commerce and of life. So was it with the breaking up of the ignorance, the prejudices, the mental and moral fetters by which men were held captive in other centuries. It seemed at one time as if those bonds would last forever. But there were influences at work to destroy them which were too powerful. Those influences were the joint product of the past and the present. They represented many agencies and instrumentalities favorable to the grand result, nature helping man, as the earth in the Apocalypse helped the woman. The everlasting hills, the silent stars and the great oceans, nourished in men's hearts the love of freedom. The discoverers who have used the forces of nature in giving man greater control over matter and aiding him in scattering far and wide the printed page, were pioneers; and the poets who thrilled men's souls with songs of freedom; the patriots and warriors who bled and died for it; the great teachers and thinkers of the race, who vindicated man's right to knowledge, to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; the statesman who framed instruments of liberty, magna chartas, bills of right, acts of emancipation, deeds of manumission; declarations of independence; the preachers of righteousness who gave the sanction of religion to the acts of heroes; all these have been co-workers in building the temple of freedom, and in carrying on the great and god-like work of human enfranchisement. Nor will the number of these co-workers ever grow less until their voices cease to be heard. The Girondists when they were being put to death began singing hymns of liberty, and their number was so great that the song swelled into a mighty chorus. But as one after another was led forth to death, the chorus waxed fainter and fainter. At last there was but a single voice to chant the hymn, and soon that also ceased and silence reigned. But the reverse will be the case with the friends and promoters of freedom. The chorus which they raise is ever being increased in volume and power, nor will the work which they have commenced ever go backward. The rivers will again submit to the seductive embraces of the ice-king. Their waters will again be frozen, still and silent, but the river of knowledge and freedom shall never cease to flow, nor shall the fair trees planted near its banks ever cease to yield their goodly fruits, which

shall minister alike to the intellectual and moral transformation of the nations.

Be it ours—rather be it yours—my dear young friends, you who are just setting out on the journey of life, with reverence for the past and faith in the future, never to retard but always to promote the happy consummation. Hasten happy time, so long desired, so long foretold, when knowledge, truth and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.